

The United Church of Canada
Bathurst Pastoral Charge
First United Church, Bathurst
www.firstunited-bathurst.ca

December 8, 2024
2nd Sunday of Advent

Interim Minister Rev. Ivan Gregan **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott
Greeters Julie & Harvey Spence
Audio & Visual Technicians Shirley Allain & Donald Eddy

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Malachi 3:1-4	Zephaniah 3:14-20
Luke 1:68-79	Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 1:3-11	Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:1-6	Luke 3:7-18

*The asterisk * identifies those times in the service where you are invited to present yourselves, body, mind, and spirit, as is comfortable for you today...*

GATHERING

MUSIC AS WE GATHER

WELCOME

TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *(in unison)*

As we gather to worship, let's respectfully pause to remember we live and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded territory of the original peoples, the Mi'kmaq. May we live with respect on this land, and live in peace and in friendship with its people.

***CALL TO WORSHIP** *(responsively)*

In the midst of deepening darkness, the Light of Christ is shining.

Faithful is our God.

In the midst of the cold of winter,
we live with the promise of spring

Faithful is our God.

In the midst of anxious rushing, the peace of God is with us.

Faithful is our God.

God calls us now to worship, with Light,
with Promise, and with Peace.

Let us worship God.

*** CENTERING FOR WORSHIP** "Gloria" VU #37

Gloria! Gloria! In excelsis Deo!
Gloria! Gloria! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory in the highest!
Glory to God! Glory to God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

***LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE** *(in unison)*

The Light of God's Presence shines when two or three are gathered together in Christ's Name.

May this Candle remind us that God is here and may the Light of God fill us during our worship until we, as God's Church, shine with the Light of God for all around us.

The Christ Candle is lit.

GATHERING PRAYER *(in unison)*

God of mystery, we hear your voice, sounding in the wilderness of our lives, calling us on adventures into spirituality, beckoning us on to better lives, and guiding us in our pilgrimage home to You. Send your Holy Spirit into our midst that we may be inspired by your vision and filled with your peace. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN – “A Journey Just Begun”**

AGCS #51

Come and join us on a journey just begun
As we celebrate the life of God’s own son.
The stories of his life become our stories, too,
In the choices that we make, In ev’rything we do.
Come and join us on a journey just begun.

Refrain:

*Preparing the way, preparing the way,
We’re preparing the way of our God.*

We will walk from the darkness to the light,
Led by the shining star so bright.
Once more with hope we wait for a baby’s birth
When the love of God shall bring Peace to all the earth,
As we walk from the darkness to the light.

Refrain:

We will walk in the light of all the world,
Shining for the nations to be healed.
Jesus is our friend, companion on the way,
We want to spread his love In all we do and say,
As we walk in the light of all the world.

Refrain:

We will walk up the mountain of our God
With the children of the whole wide world abroad.
The hungry shall be fed, Yes, ev’ry girl and boy,
The captives shall go free, The lame shall leap for joy,
As we walk up the mountain of our God.

Refrain:

PRAYER OF HUMILITY (*responsively*)

God, Humanity is often scared,
Scared that we are not good enough for You,
not good enough to be loved by another,
or not good enough to love ourselves.
We need to hear your voice speaking to us.
What do you say to people who are scared?

**Don’t be afraid, my love is stronger,
My love is stronger than your fear.
Don’t be afraid, my love is stronger
And I have promised, promised to be always near.**

I bring the fears of our people before You. The fears for our future, for our children, for our parents, for our workmates, for our schools, for our Churches, for our institutions, for our very existence. We need to hear your voice speaking to us. What do you say to people who are scared?

**Don’t be afraid, my love is stronger,
My love is stronger than your fear.
Don’t be afraid, my love is stronger
And I have promised, promised to be always near.**

God of the present moment, I come before You, one voice, crying in the wilderness, speaking the prayers of many, wondering if we can make it through today, wondering if we can make it through the season, wondering.... I need to hear your voice speaking to us. What do you say to people who are wondering?

**Don’t be afraid, my love is stronger,
My love is stronger than your fear.
Don’t be afraid, my love is stronger
And I have promised, promised to be always near.**

Ever present God, giver of peace, hear the prayers of your people, who, in silence, bring their lives to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND FORGIVENESS

CHORAL RESPONSE – “Hope Is a Star”

VU #7

*Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
Giving a promise of safety and worth.
When God is a child there's hope in our song
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong
And none shall be afraid!*

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE – PEACE

Brooke Knowles & Helen Knowles

Last week, God gave us the promise of HOPE,
this week God speaks of PEACE.

Peace is the Presence of God.

The Peace of God calls us to seek justice and resist evil.

Peace comes in many forms and through many different ways.

Peace is the absence of fear for all people.

In the Presence of God, there is peace

The Prince of Peace calls us to to be Peacemakers.

Peace is a gift from God.

We light this Advent Candle – a symbol of PEACE. God's Gift to us.

The Advent Candle is lit



CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

**We are searching for Peace.
Peace among nations.
Peace between peoples.
Peace amid conflicts.
Peace in our lives.
O Prince of Peace, remind us,
God is with us. We are not alone.**

CHORAL RESPONSE – “A Candle is Burning”

VU #6

*A candle s burning a candle of peace.
A candle to signal that conflict must cease:
for Jesus is coming to show us the way;
A message of peace humbly laid in the hay.*

SHARING A STORY (with those of all ages)

**In peace, dear God, I come to you
through Jesus Christ who makes me new.
And while I run or play or rest,
be with those whom I love best,
Guide me in your Holy Way,
as You walk with me each day, Amen.**

*SINGING A SONG – “Jesus, Our Brother”

VU #56

Jesus, our brother, kind and good,
was humbly born in a stable rude,
and the friendly beasts around him stood,
Jesus, our brother, kind and good.

“I,” said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
“I carried the mother up hill and down,
I carried his mother to Bethlehem town;
I,” said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

“I,” said the cow, all white and red,
“I gave him my manger for his bed,
I gave him hay to pillow his head;
I,” said the cow, all white and red.

“I,” said the sheep with curly horn,
“I gave him my wool for his blanket warm,
he wore my coat on Christmas morn;
I,” said the sheep, with curly horn.

"I," said the dove, from the rafters high,
"I cooed him to sleep that he should not cry,
we cooed him to sleep, my mate and I;
I," said the dove, from the rafters high.

Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,
in the stable dark were glad to tell
of the gifts they gave Emmanuel,
the gifts they gave Emmanuel.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Cheryl Brewster

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 3:1-6

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC – "Look Towards Christmas"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS (*formerly Minute for Mission*)

Ronalds Family

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

OFFERINGS ARE GATHERED

THE OFFERINGS and WHITE GIFTS ARE BROUGHT FORWARD

WHITE GIFT LITANY

We gather the gifts for God's Mission.

Food for the hungry, clothes for the cold, gift cards for the forgotten.

The shepherds brought their sheep as their offering, the angels brought a song as their offering.

We bring what we have as our offering.

Some are in their boxes, some are in their jars or cans, some are wrapped in white paper,

All are wrapped in love.

Some are things we've made ourselves, some are things we've bought,

All are things that some child of God needs.

We thank You, God, that You have given us this chance to give to You. Receive our gifts for your Mission work in our community. Amen.

*ADVENT OFFERING HYMN

(Tune: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow)

***Peace is our hope for all the earth,
Peace in the promise of new birth.
Peace for those both far and near.
Peace now and all throughout the year.***



COMMUNAL PRAYERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER – NOTRE PÈRE

GOING OUT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN** - "He is Born / Il est né"

VU #50

He is born, little Child divine;
play on the reeds while the lutes are strumming.
He is born, little Child divine;
join the song to announce the day.

Through long ages of the past,
prophets have foretold his coming;
thru long ages of the past,
now the time has come at last!

Le refrain:

*Il est né, le divin Enfant,
jouez hautbois résonnez musettes;
il est né, le divin Enfant,
chantons tous son avènement!*

O how lovely, O how pure
is this perfect child of heaven;
O how lovely, O how pure
gracious gift to humankind!

Le refrain:

Lowly lodged in a stable poor,
laid on straw for his infant cradle.
Lowly lodged in a stable poor,
God come down to our mortal aid.

Le refrain:

Jesus, Lord of all the world,
coming as a child among us,
Jesus, Lord of all the world,
grant to us your heavenly peace.

Le refrain:

***COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING**

The Christ Candle is extinguished.

***ADVENT CHORAL CLOSING**

MV #221

“I am Walking a Path of Peace”

***I am walking a path of peace,
I am walking a path of peace,
I am walking a path of peace,
lead me home, lead me home.***

POSTLUDE

Upcoming Christmas Services

at First United:

December 22nd at 10 AM – Advent 4 Service with Communion

December 24th at 4 PM – Family Christmas Eve Service

December 24th at 7 PM – Christmas Eve Service

Church News

This Week at First United Church		
Office Hours: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday to Friday		
Monday	9:00 – 11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH Gym
Wednesday	9:00 – 11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH Gym
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market

Peanut Butter – Once again this year we have set a goal of 900 jars of peanut butter to donate to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Up to December 5th, 2024 we have collected 1006 jars.

Introduction to becoming an “Affirming Congregation” – there will be a short introduction/information session next Sunday, December 15th from 12 noon to 1 PM lead by Rev. Ivan Gregan for anyone who would be interested.

Time for Fellowship - The 2025 Hosting Sheets are in the Ruth Morrison Room. Would you like to assist the members of the Hospitality & Friendship Team to provide/serve refreshments following our church services? We are looking for families, individuals and youth interested in contributing to this enjoyable fellowship opportunity. Please feel free to add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Ruth Morrison Room and talk with a member of the Fellowship Team.

Many thanks to everyone who has volunteered in 2024!

Your *Hospitality & Friendship Team*,
Bill Stack, Nancy Jagoe, Shirley Sealy, Gayle Ferron

If you are aware of **anyone in the hospital or needing a visit**, please let the office know (506-546-3532) and the message will be forwarded to the Pastoral Care Team.

A very special thank you to Gary and his elves who helped decorate for the Christmas season: Gary Branch, Gwen Sturgeon, Bev Murphy, Wayne Clowater, Isabel Clouston, Lester Scott, Rick Watling, Sara and Ava Ernst.

Church News



Once again this year we are hoping to have the beauty of our sanctuary enhanced with poinsettias for the Christmas season. Those wishing to contribute to the ***Annual Poinsettia***

Fundraiser may place an envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Please mark clearly on the face of the envelope – Poinsettia Fundraiser with your name, PAR or envelope number. List the names that you wish to have printed in the Christmas bulletin insert. Donations will also be received in the church office – *deadline is Wednesday, December 11, 2024.*

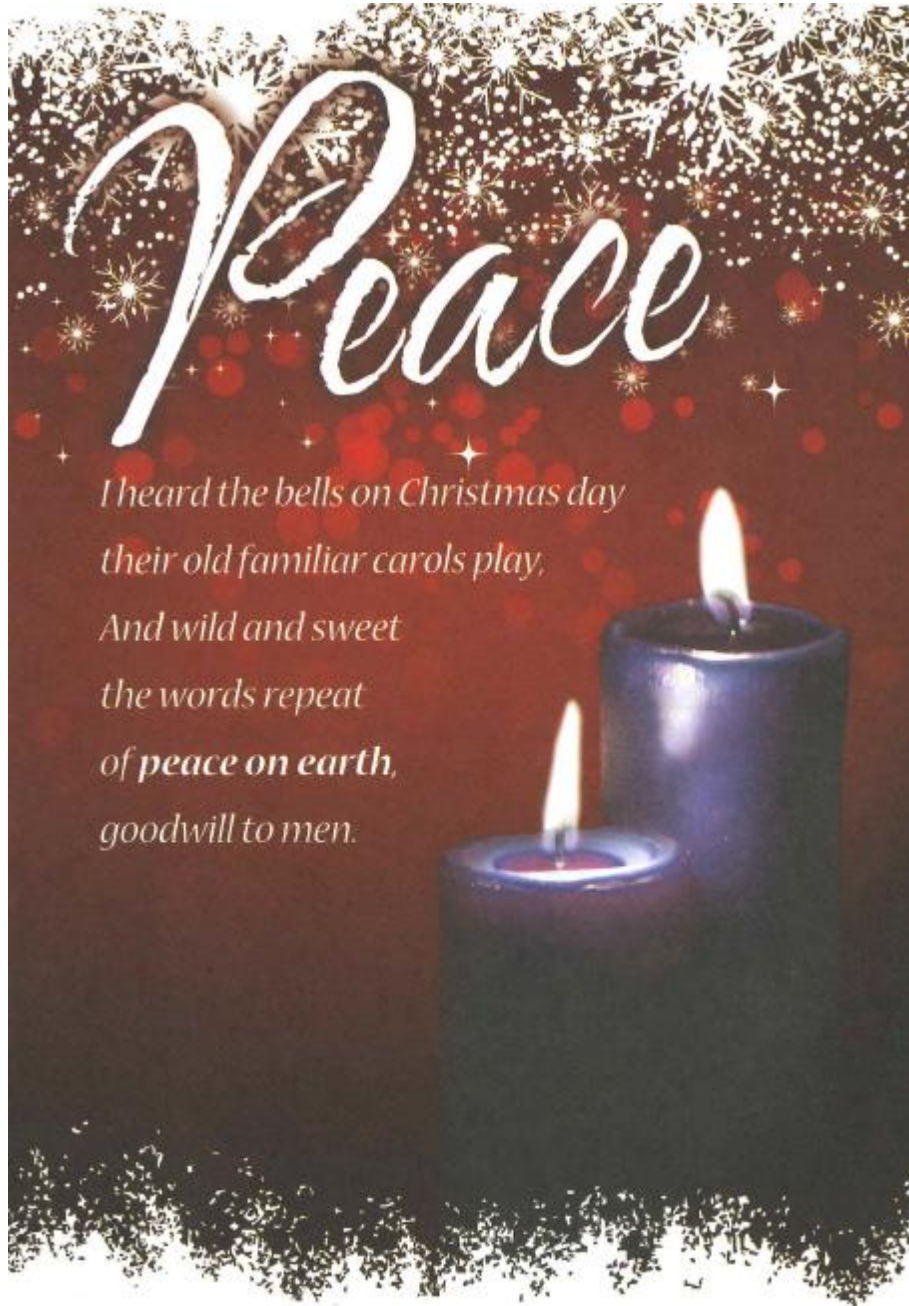
Annual Christmas Benevolence Fund: - It’s that time of year! Giving to this fund is even more important than ever. The costs relating to feeding families, and having a warm place to live has become very prevalent in our area. Should you wish to give you will find an envelope on the tree which is set up in the narthex. Then you may drop the envelope in the offering plate or drop it off at the church office during the week. Make your cheques payable to First United Church. Please mark clearly that this donation is for the Benevolence Fund. The proceeds from this fund support the Bathurst Volunteer Center and people in our congregation who need assistance.

***We thank-you for your generosity
– Community Outreach Sub-Team***

Community News

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George’s Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on Saturday, December 14th from 8:00 – 10:00 AM. As this community event serves to fund our local mission projects, we rely on donations and ask that you consider a minimum donation of \$ 8.00 to help defray costs. We appreciate your kindness and support. Come and enjoy fellowship and great food.

St. George’s Choir and Friends invite you to join us on ***Thursday, December 12th at 7:00 pm*** for an evening of Christmas Carol singing, refreshments and fellowship.



*I heard the bells on Christmas day
their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
the words repeat
of peace on earth,
goodwill to men.*

This man shall be the peace.

Micah 5:5

SCRIPTURE READINGS

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

MALACHI 3:1-4

The Coming Messenger

1 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like washers' soap;

3 he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.

4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years.

LUKE 3:1-6

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene,

2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

3 He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,

4 as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,
"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth,

6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "